

## Unspoken by MrsB108

**Category:** Stranger Things, 2016

**Genre:** Angst

**Language:** English

**Characters:** J. Hopper, Joyce B.

**Status:** In-Progress

**Published:** 2018-08-31 10:11:38

**Updated:** 2018-08-31 10:11:38

**Packaged:** 2019-12-12 22:40:26

**Rating:** T

**Chapters:** 1

**Words:** 1,307

**Publisher:** [www.fanfiction.net](http://www.fanfiction.net)

**Summary:** Joyce Byers/Jim Hopper - A brief discussion of what can never be

## Unspoken

The loud clack of hundreds of wheels on the smooth surface of the roller skating rink echoed choppily in the massive arena. Accompanied by the sounds of loud music, laughter, and electronic noises from the arcade section, Chief Jim Hopper stood at the refreshment bar impatiently waiting for the two beers he had ordered exactly seven minutes ago.

Hopper leaned dramatically over the counter and rudely shouted, "Hey! Where the hell are my beers?"

The server was nowhere to be seen. "Unbelievable," he whispered to himself.

He turned around to face the rest of the room, subconsciously taking stock of all the people he cared about ; something he did instinctively and constantly since recent events.

He saw Will, Dustin, and Lucas surrounding a pinball machine in the crowded arcade; they were laughing, jokingly shoving each other around, straight up having a great time. His gaze shifted to the roller rink and he managed to find Mike and his "daughter" Eleven, or Jane as they were now forced to remember to refer to her. They were skating slowly amid a mass of exuberant skaters, hands clasped together, exchanging smiles, trudging along with the music. Hopper smirked to himself. It truly made his heart fill with joy to see Jane look so happy and...normal. She deserved so much and he wanted nothing more than to give it to her.

His gaze drifted over to the food court to his right. Joyce was sitting at the picnic table he had left her at to get the beers, seemingly forever ago. She faced the rest of the arena, her dark brown eyes also vigilantly watching over their group, with a cigarette in one hand and the other hand nervously twisting around a strand of hair. She looked...beautiful, he admitted to himself.

She must have sensed his gaze, because hers shifted towards him and her furrowed brow relaxed and her nervous expression faded into a broad smile as she caught his eyes. She lifted her hands in a gesture

that could only mean 'whats taking so long'? He made a disgusted expression and gesture towards the bar where the server magically reappeared with two tall draft beers in his hands. Hopper gave him an annoyed look, took the beers, and headed back towards his seat.

He placed one glass in front of Joyce and sat beside her, already chugging his own as he took his seat. They were facing outward towards the arena sitting on the same plank of the picnic table but with a good amount of space between them. By the time he actually sat, half his beer was gone.

"Hopper!" Joyce exclaimed noticing the glass. "You drink that fast you're gonna be back up there, giving that kid a hard time again in about two seconds flat."

He grimaced. "Good point."

They sat there, staring out at the kids, together. Joyce gave a deep sigh. Hopper turned slightly to her.

"What?"

Joyce looked at him, sheepishly. "Oh, nothing. I just...I know it sounds stupid, but whenever we're all together like this...its the only time I feel like I can ever...I don't know...relax, I guess."

He looked away, back towards the room. "That's not stupid at all. I feel exactly the same."

He didn't look back at her when she asked, "Do you think it will always be this way?"

He took a long swig of his beer before answering. "I sure as hell don't know." He reached into his back pocket, withdrawing a pack of cigarettes and a lighter.

After lighting his cigarette and taking a puff, he offered it to Joyce, who happily accepted. It was such a small gesture and yet every time she took a smoke from him, it made him happy. What a silly, dopey thing, he thought to himself.

They sat that way for while; drinking, smoking, and watching the

kids, occasionally laughing at the passerbys outfit or drunken behavior.

As time passed, they appeared to be sitting closer and closer to each other on the plank of the picnic table. He wasn't sure if she noticed their closeness, but he sure did.

"Hopper?" she said almost directly in his right ear. She smelled like peaches and beer. It was intoxicating to him.

"Yeah?" he replied without turning to look at her.

"Thank you, for everything. For all of us. Nothing feels like its ever going to be the way it was before, but you always make us, make ME feel safe. Even when everything is literally going to hell. You make me feel..." her voice trailed off, as all Hopper could do was hope that she DID and DID NOT finish that sentence.

He wouldn't look at her. He ducked his head down a bit, staring at the swill remaining in the bottom of his beer glass.

"I would do anything for those kids...for you."

Joyce placed her hand on his and for him it was practically overwhelmingly electric. He abruptly stood, causing half the plank to scrape loudly against the floor. Nearby people momentarily looked up in alarm. Joyce's smile turned to surprise and worry.

"What is it?" she stood, asking him intently.

Hopper felt embarrassed and swiveled his head towards an exit, "Nothing, I just need some air." He made a beeline for the back door that led into an alley, letting it slam behind him.

Joyce looked around for the kids, they all seemed to be fine and she surprised herself by deciding to take her eyes off them and follow Hopper into the alley.

She opened the door and let it close loudly behind her, muting most of the loud sounds of the arena to a dull din. Hopper was pacing the alley, rubbing his hair back with both hands in a exasperated gesture.

"Hopper, just tell me; what's wrong?" she asked intently nearing him.

He guffawed. "Nothing, I'm an idiot. Just go back inside Joyce and watch the kids."

Joyce felt stung. "Screw you Jim! I'm not leaving until you tell me what's wrong!"

Hopper looked around, they were alone in the alley. He looked at her, she was so worried about him and pissed off at the same time. He closed the gap between them until he was directly in front of her.

"Joyce, " he said earnestly, knowing what he said was true. "I will always be there for you and the kids, no matter what. You know that. But...you deserve to be happy. You deserve a guy who will be everything you need. Not some toxic waste dump of a guy who is so broken he can only bring you down with him. You deserve a guy like...Bob." It pained him to say his name and from the look on her face, it hurt her to hear it.

She looked up at him, his face almost pleading. "Bob was...wonderful." Joyce swallowed as she thought of the words she wanted to say. "But even if he were here right now, Jim...he isn't who I want."

Hopper closed his eyes, hearing everything in that sentence he ever wanted to hear from her and yet the last thing he wanted to. "I refuse to bring any more pain or misery into your life, Joyce. You or your boys."

The back door opened abruptly and loud music and laughter spilled out into the alley. The bar server was carrying two trash bags and seemed surprised to see them. He smiled creepily and Hopper gave him a dirty look. The server's smile retracted and he hastily placed the trash in the nearby dumpster and headed back in the arena.

Hopper looked down at Joyce, his intent clear. "This conversation is over."

*Please leave a review*